

up and support a foreign aid package that helped Israel defend itself and our own security interests in the Middle East.

I look forward to continuing to work to ensure that the U.S.-Israel relationship grows stronger during this difficult time in the Middle East and around the globe.

CONGRATULATING HINSDALE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL BADMINTON TEAM

(Mrs. BIGGERT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pride that I rise today to congratulate the Hinsdale Central Red Devils on winning the Illinois State Team Badminton Championship.

At a tournament last weekend hosted by Eastern Illinois University, Central scored a hard-fought victory over a tough field of competitors, including the very talented second-place winners from Hinsdale South.

Led by Karishma Kolipara, who won her third State singles championship, the team racked up a total of 14 points for a two-point margin of victory. This marks the first time that Central has won the State team championship in badminton, and follows on the heels of a second place finish in 2004, fifth place in 2006, and sixth place in 2007.

In addition to Karishma, teammates Katie Cortopassi, Melissa Moucka, Jessica Petrie, Alex Ward, and Julie Ziolkowski all helped to bring home the trophy through their outstanding play in both singles and doubles. And guiding them to the championship were Coach Carissa Niemann and Assistant Coach Courtney Wallace.

Mr. Speaker, the competitive and team-oriented spirit of these champions is a credit to Hinsdale Central and to Illinois. They worked and played hard all season to become the best in the State, and last Saturday they proved to be just that.

Once again I congratulate the Red Devils on this historic achievement and wish them continued success in the years to come.

HONORING ROBERT EARL HARRIS

(Mr. BUTTERFIELD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I rise tonight with mixed emotion to recognize a young man who has devoted his young career to the House of Representatives.

I am happy to report that my legislative director, Robert Earl Harris, who is also my assistant here on the House floor as a part of the whip operation, is leaving his employment here with the House to accept private sector employment here in Washington.

Robert Earl Harris started off, Mr. Speaker, 4 years ago as an unpaid intern with the office of my predecessor,

and he has risen through the ranks and is now the legislative director for my office and part of the whip team with Congressman JAMES CLYBURN.

I want to thank Robert Harris for his service to the House of Representatives, and thank him for the great American that he is.

STEPS TO ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this majority has accumulated a number of broken promises since taking over the majority, but perhaps the most disappointing and painful for the American people has been their lack of a plan to lower gas prices and help American families.

There are very deliberate steps that can be taken in bipartisan cooperation to lower the price of gasoline—investing in local energy exploration, building new refineries, promoting conservation, investing in alternative energy resources like nuclear power that are proven, clean, and cost effective. These steps, some short term, some long term, will give the American people relief at the pump and at the store.

And while most agree we should invest in 21st century energy sources, it seems some in this body are adamantly opposed to taking the necessary steps to provide American families relief with the resources we already have here at home.

America's blessed with oil and natural gas reserves. We are blessed with the ingenuity and technology to take advantage of our natural resources without damaging the environment.

In conclusion, God bless our troops, and we will never forget September the 11th.

□ 2215

THE DUNCAN HUNTER NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2009

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss my vote on H.R. 5658, the Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2009.

I applaud Chairman SKELTON and Ranking Member HUNTER for the work they have done. In fact, I quote Samuel Adams, who said, "All might be free if they valued freedom and defended it as they should."

We applaud the young men of the United States military, and I believe this bill that has \$2 billion toward unfunded readiness initiatives is a good bill. I believe the \$800 million for National Guard and Reserve equipment makes it a good bill, \$650 million to

keep defense facilities in good working order makes it a good bill, the 3.9 percent increase in raise for all servicemembers, the health provisions. The bill establishes a career intermission pilot program to allow a servicemember to be released from active duty for a maximum of 3 years to focus on personal or professional goals outside the military. I believe it is important to note that there are new procedures for interrogation in the field.

And yet I did offer an amendment that would have helped us end the war in Iraq by recounting the fact that all the tasks for ending the war have been accomplished by the military. That amendment was not accepted. And as well, I offered an amendment that would have celebrated all of our troops from Afghanistan and Iraq when they come home.

The fact that this bill provides \$70 billion for the Iraq War, Mr. Speaker, I could not vote for the bill. I voted "no." I explain this so that all might know there are good provisions in this bill, but I cannot support the war ever again. I voted "no" on this bill.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. MITCHELL). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 18, 2007, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

FALLEN WARRIORS OF SOUTH EAST TEXAS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE. "From this day to the ending of the world, we in it shall be remembered. We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother."

Mr. Speaker, Shakespeare penned this in Henry V. It represents the unfailing commitment soldiers have for their fellow comrades.

Since 2004, 26 men and women from the Second Congressional District area of Texas have served honorably and given their lives for the cause of freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan; 26 times I have come to this House floor to talk about one of them.

This Memorial Day I would like to honor them again by name. They aren't just a statistic, Mr. Speaker. They are real people who gave their life for the American cause. They are the sons and daughters of America, and they are our heroes.

In America's first war fighting for freedom, it was said by Patrick Henry, "The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, and to the brave." We are fortunate that those words still ring true today and that American troops overseas carry those values into battle.